GREAT BARRINGTON
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND (AHTF)
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MINUTES w/ ATTACHMENTS
Thursday, February 6, 2020, 6:30 PM
Great Barrington Fire Station, 37 State Road

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chmn. Bill Cooke, Fred Clark, John Katz, Samantha Homeyer, Larissa Yable, Garfield Reed, and Jonathan Hankin (on speaker phone).

GUESTS & OTHERS: Daniel Alden of Alden Country Real Estate Services, Brian Sullivan of WGBY Public Television, Carolyn Valli of Habitat for Humanity, Bob & Rene Gray, Jennifer Race, Karin Passmore, Dan Bailly, James Bailly, Sara Bringham, (Shepley Evans, Administrative Support)

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Cooke called the meeting together at 5:34 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Mr. Hankin, 2nd by Mr. Katz, to approve the minutes of January 2, 2020 as corrected. Unanimous approval.

Mr. Cooke open a conversation of the Alden property noting that he wished to schedule meetings with the neighbors to the property as he is aware that the neighbors have many questions for the group. He reported that conversations with Berkshire Housing revealed that BH would prefer to see all rental units developed at the Alden property and would also want to see more total number of units constructed there than the AHTF Trustees have wanted.

Mr. Clark summarized his memo, drafted since the most recent Trustees’ meeting, which points toward producing "affordable work-force housing" at a cost of about $125,000 per unit plus land cost, similar to the reported production costs of Habitat for Humanity. Target customers might have median family income of about $78,000 for a family of four persons.

Mr. Cooke reported that there is grant funded money available from Mass Housing for development of water and sewer for such developments which could help to hold down the cost of "shovel ready" individual house lots.

Mr. Reed liked Mr. Clark’s concept, but would like to see the Trust keep some rental units in the mix.
Mr. Cooke introduced Carolyn Valli from Habitat for Humanity to the Board, and Mr. Clark reminded that because the AHTF is a Town entity, the Board must make its development opportunities available to all interested parties. The Board could not offer to make "Habitat" the exclusive builder.

Mr. Katz reinforced the Board's interest in getting input from neighbors and others as plans are being discussed.

Mr. Clark presented a draft outline of ideas for an RFP for the Alden property. He suggested a minimum of 10 to 30 units, mostly to be offered for ownership, I to 4 family structures, all to be affordable at 100% of the median area household income for a family of 2 to 4, "turnkey" at closing, and meeting all local codes. (See Attachment (A) handout from Mr. Clark for more detail.) He asked Ms. Valli of Habitat for Humanity about the possibility of building several units a once? She replied 'that Habitat is currently finishing six units all at once. However, she cautioned, it is challenging to get all the probable occupants up to speed and ready to go to closing at +/- the same time.

Ms. Yaple, Mr. Katz & Mr. Reed all wanted to include some rental units. Mr. Clark reminded that finance for rental projects comes from many sources and each has different reporting requirements, which necessitates having a manager on the development staff.

Mr. Cooke & Mr. Katz expressed the board's need to talk to neighbors, town folks and potential partners to get a better understanding of what is desired in such a project.

Mr. Reed addressed the assembled audience, apologizing for not coming to the neighbors sooner to get their input, and expressed his interest in seeing multi-family and individual rental units included in the project.

Mr. Cooke called on neighbors and others in the room to step to the podium and share their issues and questions, and various board members answered some of these:

Bob & Mary Ellen Gray, #3 Comstock Lane:

Q: Has the board looked into redundant, under-utilized or unfilled housing? A: Such housing is scarce. Construct has a waiting list for affordable housing of over 400 names.
Q: Where is the sewer connection? We've been told it is at the Main and Oak intersection.
Q: Why doesn't the Board have these facts already?
(See Attachment (B) 2 1/2 page list of questions or issues from Mr. Gray.)
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Jennifer Race, 377 North Plain Road:
Q: About extension of the sidewalks, where will they end? Right now they end at #41 Main Street. Her property is right there at the corner.
Q: Has the Board thought about crosswalk problems? Are you aware of traffic accidents in the neighborhood?

Karin Passmore, 3 17 North Plain Road:
Q: Does the Board know how dangerous this road is? There are lots of kids in Housatonic. Cars speed on all these roads. Intersections and crossings need to be carefully designed. Has the board thought about this? Kids on bikes everywhere. She would rather see development and families with kids on the Housatonic side of Rt. 41. A: Mr. Reed: Everyone will want to see good planning.

Bob Gray, 3 Comstock Lane:
Q: Are the board members aware that land is low — that there is pooling stormwater?
A: Mr. Cooke: There will have to be storm sewers engineered.
Q: At Halloween, the police were unresponsive. What about police and fire dept. coverage? Shouldn't there be extra police and firemen to cover expansion of the neighborhood?
Q: What about employment opportunities? Where will all these new people work?
Q: What about the impact on taxpayers? Not-for-profit apartment house owners won't be paying any taxes, will they? A: Mr. Cooke: Yes, the owners will be private people and will pay real estate taxes like everybody else.

Dan Bailly, 207 North Street:
Q: If all 24 lots get sold to Berkshire Housing or other developers, do they sell to homeowners? How does the Affordable Housing Trust do their due diligence to know where the project is going?
Q: That land has been on the market for years. Shouldn't the Trust negotiate a lower purchase price? Shouldn't the board try to make the prices more affordable? A: Dan Alden gave the history of his parents owning the land. They researched the costs for running Town Sewer vs. constructing septic system(s). $175,000 was what would get Dan Alden's parents out without taking a loss they could not afford.
Q: What about the neighbors assessed at $350,000 and the new houses assessed at $175,000 or $200,000? Who makes up the difference? Do the neighbors get devalued? The Trustees have their source(s) of funding and don't need to do due diligence. The citizens feel like they have to do the due diligence.

James Bailly, 9 Linda's Lane
Q: Why didn't the Trustees do the due diligence?
Q: Why didn't AHTF sort out sewer questions?
Q: Why not sort out the storm water system?
Sara Bingham, 391 North Plain Road:
   Q: Did the Trustees do no homework?
Laura Dupont, 5 Comstock Lane:
   Q: What if the Town doesn't give the AHTF the grant; does the sale not go forward?
   A: Mr. Katz: Yes, the sale doesn't go through.
   A: Mr. Clark: The Trust would pursue other avenues.
   A: Mr. Katz: The CDC owned 100 Bridge Street first. You can't get grant money committed until you have the land under control. Q: What's the next step?

James Bailly:
   Q: Shouldn't the RFP reflect what the neighborhood wants?

Dan Bailly:
   Q: This is all nice - but, its going to cost good money, isn't it?
   So many unanswered questions: Engineering, Sidewalks, Crosswalks, etc. etc.

Mr. Cooke acknowledged there was work to do, and the next meeting of the Board of Trustees would be on Thursday, March 5th.

Brian Sullivan of WGBY re-introduced himself, handed out cards and indicated that he was working on a program on the affordable housing subject in the area.

Mr. Clark proposed that 2 or 3 people should be deputized to talk to developers and others.
Mr. Cooke volunteered to sort out the questions about sewers and sidewalks.
Mr. Clark, Ms. Homeyer and Mr. Reed volunteered to talk with Habitat for Humanity. Dan Alden offered to be whatever assistance he could.

Citizen Speak Time / Media Time: none

Adjournment: Hearing no objection, Mr. Cooke adjourned the meeting at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Shepley Evans
Administrative Support
Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust
By Fred Clark

Alden Site, DRAFT Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Great Barrington Affordable Housing Trust, an appointed committee of the Town of Great Barrington is seeking proposals to develop and manage new affordable housing on a land on North Plain Road known as the Alden site. The intent is to provide affordable community housing compatible with the neighborhood. The proposal should adhere to the following parameters:

1. A minimum of ten to twenty affordable housing units with limit of no more than 32 total dwelling units.
2. Emphasis should be on owner occupied dwellings but may contain a mix of rental in one to four family structures.
3. Priority will be given to shared green space which may include gardens, buffers, and/or recreation areas.
4. Ideal Housing units should be affordable at 100% of area median income for a family of two to four.
5. Consideration will be given to shared community facilities along the model of Co-Housing, zero-lot line developments where yards are merged into community open space, or other facilities held in common.
6. Development should be turn-key and should include management and assistance with qualification and financing.
7. The successful applicant must hold community outreach meetings in Housatonic before their proposal is finalized for construction.
8. All local codes including the Stretch Code must be adhered to.
9. Additional consideration will be given to near net-zero and solar ready developments.
Questions from Bob Gray

Infrastructure
- Where is the required hook-up to town sewer for the proposed development to town sewer access located?
- Will the sewer rate-payers be solely responsible for the cost of any extension required? Or is there grant money available for this extension? If so, where will this funding originate and what percentage of the cost will be covered?
- Where will required sewage pumping station be located? If not on the property in question, will it be necessary to take land for this aspect of the proposed project? Who will pay for this purchase? Or will you resort to eminent domain?

Property
- What other properties in Great Barrington did you query and consider before choosing the property in question? Please be specific.
- What qualities made the property in question more desirable than the other properties considered? Please be specific.
- Even considering the difference between retail and assessed value, what attempts, besides offering more than the retail value of the land, did you make to negotiate the price of the property on behalf of the taxpayers of Great Barrington whose interests you purport to represent? Will the taxpayers have to bear any additional cost?

Access to Underutilized Housing
- Have you surveyed all unutilized or underutilized rental properties in Great Barrington? Why not?
- Are you familiar with the concept of rental vouchers?
- Have you given any consideration to rental vouchers to provide access to underutilized housing in town before embarking on developing the property in question?

Access to and from the Proposed Development?
- Where does the current proposed sidewalk extension presently terminate? If it doesn't terminate at the site of the proposed development, then where?
- If the sidewalk must extend to Route 41, will the taxpayers of Great Barrington be responsible for the cost of this extension?
- Will land-taking be required for this proposed extension?
- If the proposed sidewalk terminates at Route 41, will it impact the Lovett/Race properties? Or do you propose a diagonal sidewalk?
- If the proposed development reaches fruition, as there are no essential services in Housatonic, to where will people travel on these sidewalks?
- What protections/cautions do you propose for people using this crosswalk? A traffic light? Or a cone with a sign indicating pedestrians' crosswalk priorities to cars approaching the junction of Route 41 and Main Street?
- What guarantees do you have from the BRTA to establish a route to and from the proposed project? If none, then how can you tout this service as an essential part of your proposal?
- Have there been consultations with Police Department about the number of accidents at the Main Street/Route 41 intersection? If not, then why not? Shouldn't this be a priority in your plan going forward?

**Ecological Concerns**
- Because the proposed development is level with or below road and abutting property levels, what thought have you given to storm runoff? Is there any infrastructure to provide for this contingency? Are there grants available? If not, who will pay for this aspect of the proposed project?

**Employment Opportunities**
- Have you surveyed the employment opportunities available in both the local/regional job market? Why not? How are the residents of the proposed development supposed to earn a living? Are there any employment opportunities within walking distance of the proposed project?

**Proposed Developers**
- Who will be responsible for developing the proposed project? If you don't know at this time, when will you know? What process will you use in choosing the developer?

**Residents**
- To whom will housing opportunities be offered? What does this selection process entail?
- Will any priority consideration for occupancy be given to local and area residents? If not, why not? Is the process for residency completely out of local jurisdiction?

**Property Management**
- Who will administer the property, the town or the state? If it is the state, have you inquired locally regarding its response to local concerns?
- Will there be opportunities both to rent and to purchase the proposed properties? Who will be responsible for the physical 3 condition/maintenance of the rental units?
- Will regulations regarding occupancy in a rental unit be enforced? By whom?

**Policing and Fire Protection**
- Will an additional officer and cruiser be allocated to the Police Department to assure the safety of the one-hundred additional residents of the project?
- Are you aware of the scant response to calls from village residents on Hallowe'en as all personnel were answering calls in Great Barrington?
- Will the taxpayers of Great Barrington have be responsible for the cost of any personnel or equipment required?
- With the decrease in volunteerism in the Fire Department, what will the response time be for an emergency if an engine/truck must be dispatched from the Great Barrington Station?
- Fire engines/trucks are massive vehicles. Have you considered this aspect on access requirements?

Taxes
- How will the proposed project impact the taxpayer burden to the citizens of Great Barrington? How did you arrive at that sum?